NUMB. CXLVII.

The Prompter.

Rarus enim ——— SENSUS COMMUNIS. ———

Juvenal.

For COMMON SENSE *is Rare.* ———

FRIDAY, APRIL 2. 1736.

THE very great Run *Paſquin* has already had, and is ſtill like to have, is the ſevereſt Blow, that cou'd be given to our Theatres, and the ſtrongeſt Confirmation of an Opinion, I have ventured, *ſingly*, to advance, *viz. That the Stage may*, (and as it may, ought to) *be ſupported without* PANTOMIME. While our Theatrick Sovereigns, with the beſt Actors the Age can afford, are forced to call in the Aſſiſtance of *wonderful Scenary*, *ſurpriſing Transformations*, *beautiful Landſcapes*, *Dancers*, (the very beſt, both in the graceful and humourous Manner) and in ſhort, all the attendant Powers of *inexplicable Dumb Shew*, at a very great Expence; a Gentleman, under the Diſadvantage of a very bad Houſe, with ſcarce an Actor, and at very little Expence, by the ſingle Power of *Satire*, *Wit*, and *Common Senſe*, has been able to run a Play on for 24 Nights, which is now, *but* beginning to *riſe* in the Opinion of the Town.

BUT this is not all; *Farinelli*'s Benefit has paſs'd, without an Article mentioned in any Paper, of a ſingle Preſent made him; nay, I have been told, ſome of the Subſcribers *uſed* their Tickets; yet every body can remember laſt Year, what an Epidemical Madneſs was diffuſed all over the Town, caught by a Poiſon he communicated to every body within the Reach of his Breath, againſt which there cou'd then be found no *Antidote*, nay, not even a *Preſervative*.

ENTERTAINMENT is now a Word out of Faſhion, and wou'd be quite forgot, were it not kept in uſe by the *Play-bills*; but even here, I obſerve a very conſiderable Difference of *Stile*, as well as *Effect*; for not only the *Advance Money* is publickly declared to be returned to thoſe, *who find no Entertainment* after the Play is over, but it is *actually done*, as I was a pleaſed Eye Witneſs of the other Night myſelf. And to what ſhall we aſcribe this unexpected, ſudden Change? Why, COMMON SENSE has appeared in Perſon on the Stage.

IN my Paper, N° VI. ſo long ago as *Nov.* 29, 1734. I publiſhed, but not at the Requeſt of the Managers, who, I diſcover'd ſince, had turned her out themſelves, a Hue and Cry after COMMON SENSE, who had quite left the Theatres of this great City. About a Month after I received Advice, that ſhe was retired into the Country, and was protected, till the Day of his Death, by an honeſt Vicar, who, in taking her into his Care, ſhew'd a Charity, not generally practiſed by the reſt of his Brethren, who, for the moſt Part, are as hard-hearted againſt any Thing that bears the Shew of *Common Senſe*, out of the PALE, as the *mercileſs* Baniſhers of her, from the aboveſaid Theatres. When this good Man died, a Gentleman out of the Country ſent me a Letter, ſigned *Verax*, to acquaint me, that he was reſolved, in Imitation of the Deceaſed, to keep COMMON SENSE with him, till the Theatres were (once more) worthy to receive her. I little thought then, that *Verax*, and Mr. *F—d—g*, were one and the ſame Perſon: For tho' this latter has always appeared inclinable to an Alliance with COMMON SENSE in the main, yet he has at Times taken ſuch Liberties with her, that for a while I looked upon him as a Perſon in open War with her.—But, to do him Juſtice, I now think he quitted *Common Senſe*, in Compliance to the vicious Taſte of the Town, and not his *own*; that he reſerved ſhewing the Regard he had for her, in ſome of his Pieces, till he knew he ſhou'd not be laughed at, for daring to ſhew himſelf a Friend to her. I am the more inclined to this Belief, as about the Time COMMON SENSE left the Theatres, the aboveſaid Gentleman retired into the Country, where he has continued ever ſince, till this Winter, that he returned, the profeſſed Friend to COMMON SENSE, whom he brought up with him, and breathing nothing but Revenge againſt the vile Uſurpers of her lawful Empire, THE STAGE. An Example worthy Imitation, and which I venture to recommend to the *Practice*, not the *Approbation*, (for barely to approve, is negative) of ſuch GENIUS's, as are left in *England*, in whoſe Power it will be, by ſeconding this firſt Attempt, and accuſtoming the Stage to the Sight of COMMON SENSE, to make her at laſt, the only loved *Entertainment* there.

BUT

BUT I would not adviſe any, YET, to venture her NAKED on that Ground, but to arm her, like the Porcupine, *all round*, with the SHARPS of *Wit*, *Satire*, and *Humour*, of the *ſtrongeſt*, and moſt *piercing* Kind. Let it, at firſt, like Pictures bigger than the Life, command Admiration by the Force of its Appearance: By Degrees the *Colouring* may be *taken down*, and the *Terrible* ſoftned. It may afterwards be brought nearer Life, and deal in *beautiful Proportion*, and *graceful Attitude*, inſtead of *forcible Muſcling*, and *bold Poſture*.

THE *Pathetick* and *Delicate*, in Dramatick Common Senſe, (which nevertheleſs is the higheſt Effort Human Genius can reach) would, at preſent not be felt. Like a Picture of *Correggio*, where Grace and Nature delicately repreſented, ſhew all the Art of the Painter, and fill the *true*, *taſting* Connoiſſeur with inexpreſſible Delight, yet ſcarce draw the Eye of the *Vulgar*, or the *Many*; while *Michael Angelo*, *rough*, *grand*, *bold*, that makes Nature in every Compoſition ſtronger than ſhe is, never fails of attracting the moſt indifferent Eye. But to come nearer the preſent Teſt of publick Taſte for Poetry, I would recommend the *Dutch* and *Flemiſh* Schools, where Nature is every where either *low*, or *burleſqued*. Here the common, injudicious Gazer, juſtifies by his own Example the Pencil of the Painter; the Pleaſure he expreſſes in looking, putting him in the very *outrageous* Attitudes of Joy he is laughing at.

THE ingenious Author of *Paſquin*, conſcious how dangerous it might be, to venture *Common Senſe* in the Stile of *Correggio* at firſt, has, in Imitation of ſome of the beſt of Painters, form'd to himſelf a Manner, out of different Stiles, which (tho' the Particulars may be traced) is, in the whole, *Original*. Thus in the Tragedy we ſee the bold, daring Pencil of *Michael Angelo*. Satires ſtart out of every Line; they are *ſeen* and *felt*. Even when they *ſmile*, they look *terrible*, and *ſtrike* with *Force*. He has here and there given them a *Flemiſh* Touch, for the ſake of the *Vulgar*. He has been rather too ſparing of the *Correggio Manner*; for tho' in ſome Parts his Allegory is delicate in the higheſt Degree, he has heightned the Colouring ſo much, that it comes too *full* and *groſs* upon us. We loſe the Beauty of *Simplicity*, in the Strength with which *it* is lay'd on; but he is juſtifiable; for, as I obſerved before, the *Pathetick* and *Delicate* is not to be ventured yet. *Wit*, *Humour*, and *Satire*, on a *Subſtratum* of COMMON SENSE, *warmly coloured*, muſt be preparatory, and have a due Courſe of Admiration. I cou'd have wiſh'd he had been a little leſs *Flemiſh* in his Comedy; for tho' the *Corruption* he ſtrikes at would not have been *felt*, had it been leſs *coarſely hit*, than it is *practiſed* in the *World*, I queſtion, whether ſo dangerous a Vice as *Corruption* will not loſe of the *Diſguſt* it ought to inſpire, by being laugh'd at with ſo much Wit: A Thing we laugh at only, is no longer terrible. If he had dipped his Pencil in the Colours of *Michael Angelo*, and ſhewn the terrible Effects of Corruption, in the Ruin of a Borough or Corporation, he had render'd the State a publick Service; but *Trapwit* will tell us, *It would not have been a true Picture of Life, for Boroughs thrive by Corruption.*

SOME Perſons have injudiciouſly thought, the Poet levels his Satire, (not againſt the Abuſes of, but) againſt Religion, Law, and Phyſick, themſelves; but if they would attend to the Characters of the Speakers, they would find, all that is ſaid is only againſt the *Abuſe*, and not the *Foundation* of each.

I CAN'T help obſerving here, with a good deal of Mortification, tho' quite in Favour of the Poet's Skill in judging, what will, or will not ſucceed, that it was a conſiderable Time, before the Tragedy, (tho' by much the finer Performance of the two) made its Way. I have heard it called, *ſtupid*, *dull*, *nonſenſical*, with other Appellations, modern Criticks give to what they don't underſtand, and that the Comedy ſupported it. A ſhort, humourous Advertiſement engaged a cloſe Attention, and ſet it a going, and now I believe it ſupports the Comedy, at leaſt it loſes nothing by coming after it.

I AM told *Paſquin* is preparing to attack *Pantomime*, and is to begin with the *Fall of Phaeton*. I heartily wiſh him Succeſs; he is ſo much in Vogue with all Sorts of Perſons, that I believe, if the Thing is practicable, he alone can compaſs it. But I wiſh his Burleſque of *Pantomime* may not be formed upon the Model of *that*, of Tumblers, to introduce it on his little Theatre. But let him reflect, that his firſt Step towards that, is a *Remove* from *Common Senſe*; to whoſe Friendſhip he owes ſo much already, and whom, without the blackeſt Ingratitude, he can never forſake. Beſides, has it not appeared, that the very firſt Attempt of *Common Senſe* has done more in one Inſtant, than *Pantomime* ever ſince its Introduction, and during its long Continuance, has been able to effectuate, PLEASED EVERY BODY!

BUT what I now mention, ariſes more from my own Fears, than any Reaſon I have to believe it intended. Intereſt is a very prevailing Argument, eſpecially with Poets; he has ſhewn in his *Election* the Power of Gold; let him that knows it ſo well, arm himſelf againſt it, and continue, in all he undertakes, as he has ſo happily begun, to carry *Common Senſe* along with him, and never loſe Sight of her one Inſtant,

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